**9Mc Equiry Term 2, 2009-07-09**

**Reflections and review**

1**. Beginnings -**

* A library based initiative : centred around 6 secondary schools in ChCh- the Pulse Schools. Contact made in term 1. Only one other school had a social studies research focus. Most were English/library based.
* Decision made to use the top Yr 9 class that I was taking, and to centre the initiative around a theme the dept had chosen to be the focus for year 9 study under the new curriculum: **A sense of Belonging**.
* The initiative would involve an electronic inquiry by groups of students who would have maximum flexibility to choose topics within the wide Belonging theme. It seemed to offer great possibilities for such students. It would -

2**. Goals**  
 The initiative seemed an ideal vehicle for a class which were motivated, socially to skilled and containing a number of GATE students.

Explicit and implicit goals were –

* To motivate and hook students through choice, interest and the electronic medium so that they would move beyond their comfort zones
* Increase awareness of and competence in the use of the full inquiry process
* Expand student knowledge of the internet, its possibilities and its limitations when carrying out research
* Promote cooperative research
* Raise student skill levels in using Web 2 tools for research and presentation
* Promote student self management
* Raise student awareness and competence so that they might become independent life long learners

3**. The strategy**

* Students to have one designated slot per week with 2 advisors from South learning centre. These began in week 2, and all but one of them were at South learning centre. South Learning centre sessions were approx 2 hours in length
* Sth learning centre advisors provided the electronic expertise as well as support for the inquiry process
* Computer access at school was utilised whenever possible
* The class teacher’s focus was on the inquiry process- and ensuring students worked it effectively so that each was able to have a successful outcome
* Evaluations were conducted at three points in the process as a check on student attitudes, needs and the effectiveness of the programme
* The initiative ended with a celebration to which library staff, school staff, student and parents were invited

4. **A review of the goals**

* Students appeared to remain highly motivated throughout. Three groups did not manage to fully complete their presentation by the celebration night. This was through disorganisation rather than through lack of motivation.
* Students appear to have effectively worked through the inquiry process, including listing their sources, making links, evaluating their material – and reshaping it into their own words. It was especially pleasing to see students using the material tro draw their own conclusions as this was a skill with which they struggled in a term one research assignment.
* All students expanded their knowledge and their ability to use the internet for research- especially through the use of on line databases
* Most students increased their skills in using the presentation possibilities of the internet. Few had been part of managing a wiki before- and none had used glogsters. All were required to master new skills as they linked their material to the wiki
* Students now have the expertise to carry out on line independent research. Our challenge is to continue reinforcing these skills
* Most students were able to meet milestones throughout the initiative – despite other school activities, planned and unplanned absences

5. **Barriers and issues**

* The initiative did see students miss 14 periods from other subjects. 4 of these were ICT- whose needs were complementary rather than contradictory
* There was an on going difficulty in accessing computers at school This could only be managed by distributing students at different venues around the school
* I was surprised at how much time the students did need to complete their tasks. Most social studies during the term were devoted in whole or part to the initiative.
* The lack of computer access at home for some students was a barrier
* My own lack of expertise in some web 2 tools meant I was not able to be as helpful to students back at school
* The most significant issue is how the most important aspects of this initiative can be embedded into and expanded within the school

6. **The future – a way forward**

**For 9Mc**

* Electronic inquiry to be a feature of the programme- students will research different aspects of a theme on line. On period at least a week will be block booked in the lab
* A class wiki will be set up: class will assist and monitor
* The next full inquiry will be a blend of electronic and paper

**For Humanities**

* Pd will be undertaken in early term 3 to encourage use of electronic research and databases by staff
* Databases will become a featured resource as part of senior assignments
* Wikis already set up in History – and likely to be expanded. Implications of using the wiki tool as part of the management of research based internal assessment to be investigated
* Re-specifying outcomes in social studies so other students may use glogsters etc

**For the wider staff**

* Session to be held where 9Mc share their experience with the full staff. It is hoped that this may lead to further expansion of the strategies and tools used with 9Mc
* Learning centre staff may be brought in to assist